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U. S. Department of Agriculture

EARNING POSSIBILITIES OF WORKERS FOR HARVESTING SUGAR
BEETS IN THE WESTERN STATES

The earnings of workers for harvesting sugar beets are influenced by numerous factors, among which are the previous experience in topping beets or aptness for the work, the yield of beets per acre, the condition of the soil, and the weather conditions. The output per worker per day is also influenced by the method of topping, or topping and loading, which varies with the areas.

The first operation in harvesting is "lifting" with a machine which loosens the beets in the ground. The hand contract work of topping begins at this point and in the western States customarily includes the following operations: the beets are pulled from the ground by hand, knocked together to remove excess soil, and thrown into windrows so that cutting off the tops may be more easily done. The beets are then hooked from this windrow with the topping knife, topped by cutting through the beet at the lowest leaf scar and thrown into piles or windrows. The number of rows put into each windrow varies in different localities. The beets are later forked or otherwise loaded into trucks by persons other than those who do the topping.

In those areas where both topping and loading are done by the contract worker, the beets are customarily hooked and topped directly from the rows without first pulling and windrowing. The beets are then loaded by hand into trucks for delivery to the factory.

It may be estimated that the average experienced worker, under normal field conditions, will top approximately one-half acre of beets per 9-hour day. If the operation consists of both topping and loading the average experienced worker, under normal conditions, may top and load approximately one-third of an acre per 9-hour day. The following table illustrates the estimated output per man per 9-hour day at various yield levels:

Yield per acre (tons)	Estimated output per man per 9-hour day - tons				
	Topping only		:	Topping and loading	
	Average	Range	:	Average	Range
10	5.0	4.0 - 6.0	:	4.0	3.0 - 5.0
14	6.0	5.0 - 8.0	:	5.0	4.0 - 6.0
18	7.0	6.0 - 9.0	:	6.0	5.0 - 7.0

While this table indicates probable output of the average experienced worker, it is not uncommon for individuals who are more skilful to top considerably more tons per day than is estimated above. The output and earnings of an inexperienced worker should range upward from 50 percent of the above estimates and increase according to the ability of the worker as he gains additional experience.

Fair and Reasonable Wage Rates for Harvesting
Sugar Beets under the 1942 Sugar Program

Under the Sugar Act of 1937 the sugar beet grower receives a part of his income from a government payment. However, one of the conditions for receiving this payment is that the grower must pay wages not less than those determined by the Secretary of Agriculture to be fair and reasonable or a higher rate if agreed upon by grower and laborer. The determination of rates for harvesting the 1942 crop of sugar beets was made public by the Secretary on April 9. Subject to the special provisions which follow, such rates for the Western States are as follows:

District III - Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, and Southern Wyoming -

Topping: \$1.05 for each ton up to and including 12 tons per acre plus 95 cents for each ton per acre above 12 tons, or 55 cents per hour.

District IV - South Dakota - Topping: \$1.05 for each ton up to and including 12 tons per acre plus 95 cents for each ton per acre above 12 tons, or 55 cents per hour.

District V - Southern and Eastern Montana and Northern Wyoming -
Topping: \$1.05 for each ton up to and including 12 tons per acre plus 95 cents for each ton per acre above 12 tons.

District VI - Western Montana - Topping: \$1.05 for each ton up to and including 12 tons per acre plus 95 cents for each ton per acre above 12 tons.

District VII - Northern Montana - Topping and loading: \$1.25 for each ton up to and including 12 tons per acre plus \$1.15 for each ton per acre above 12 tons. When topping and loading are performed by different persons, the rate up to and including 12 tons per acre shall be \$1.05 for topping and 20 cents for loading and the rate above 12 tons per acre shall be 95 cents for topping and 20 cents for loading.

District VIII - Utah, Idaho and Oregon - Topping and loading: On a time basis, 55 cents per hour. On a piece work basis:

<u>Net tons per acre</u>	<u>Rate per ton</u>	<u>: Net tons per acre</u>	<u>Rate per ton</u>
6 or below	\$1.55	13	\$1.19
7	1.48	14	1.16
8	1.41	15	1.14
9	1.35	16	1.12
10	1.30	17	1.11
11	1.26	18 or above	1.10
12	1.22		

When topping and loading are performed by different persons, 30 percent of the above rates shall be paid for loading. (The rate for all fractional tonnages between 6 and 18 tons rounded to the nearest tenth of a ton shall be in proportion within each interval.)

District IX - Washington. - Topping: 90 cents per ton, or 55 cents per hour. Loading: 35 cents per ton, or 55 cents per hour.

Provided, however, (a) That in districts for which only piece rates are specified herein, if employment upon the basis of an hourly rate is preferred, the fair and reasonable rate shall be the rate agreed upon between the producer and the laborer, provided such rate is approved by the State Committee as equivalent to the piece rate for such work specified herein;

(b) That in instances in which the use of special machine methods of harvesting reduce the amount of labor required as compared with the method in common use in the area for the operations for which rates are specified herein, the fair and reasonable rate shall be the rate agreed upon between the producer and the laborer, provided such rate is approved by the State Committee as equivalent to the piece rate specified herein for the part of such work performed;

(c) That the foregoing shall not be construed to mean that a producer may qualify for payment who has not paid in full for all work in connection with the production, cultivation or harvesting of sugar beets the amount agreed upon between the producer and the laborer;

(d) That in addition to the foregoing, the producer shall furnish to the laborer, without charge, the perquisites customarily furnished by him, such as a house, garden plot, and similar incidentals; and

(e) That the producer shall not, through any subterfuge or device whatsoever, reduce the wage rates to laborers below those determined above.

